



## Rabies: What kids need to know!

Slides provided by:  
Massachusetts Department of Public Health  
Bureau of Communicable Disease Control  
Division of Epidemiology and Immunization



## What is Rabies?

- Rabies is a dangerous disease caused by a virus.
- Around the world, rabies kills 50,000 people and millions of animals each year.



## Any mammal can get rabies.

- Raccoons, skunks, foxes and bats
- Dogs, cats, cattle and ferrets
- Humans



☹ If a person or animal gets rabies, they will almost always die from it. ☹



## How do you get rabies?

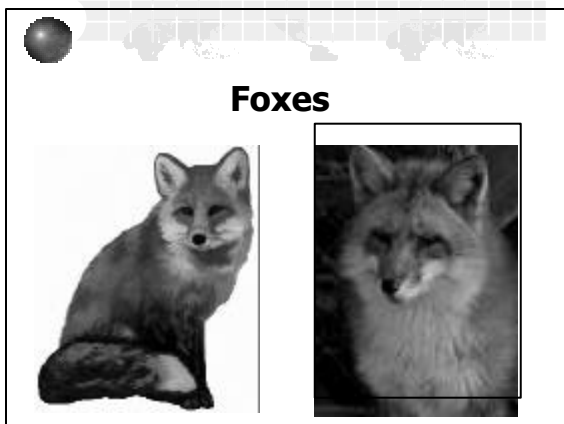
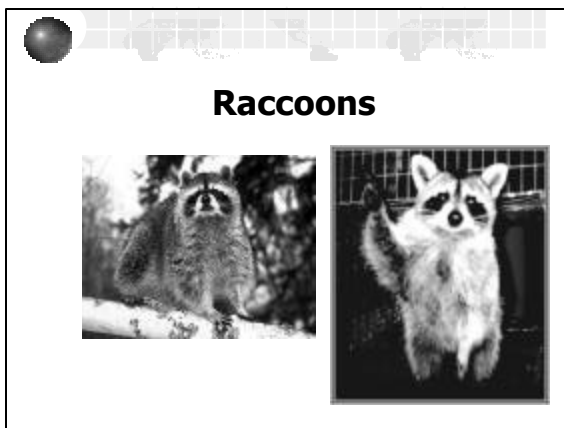
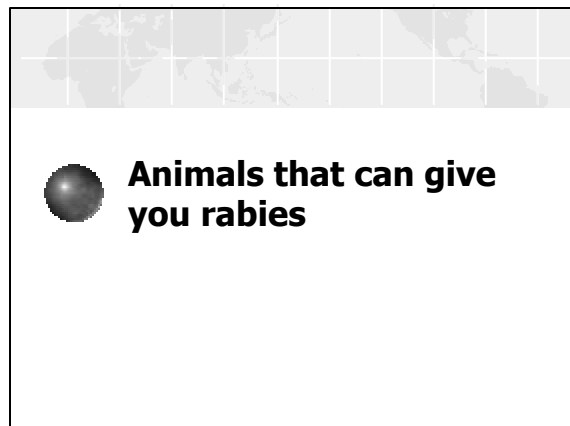
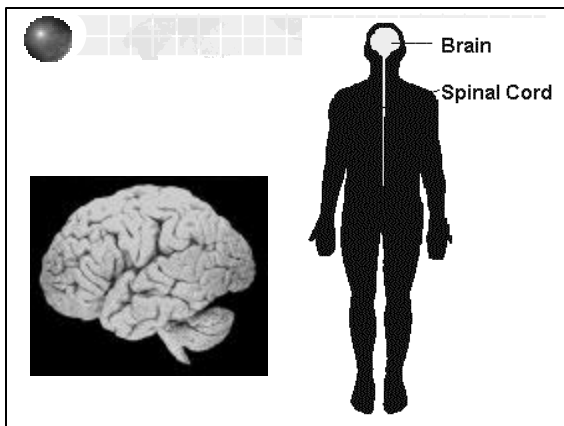
People and animals can only get rabies if they are bitten or scratched by an animal that already has rabies. Their saliva carries the rabies virus, even if the animal is dead.



## How does rabies make you sick?

- Once inside the body, the virus travels along the nerves.
- Its main target is the brain and spinal cord.





## Ground Hogs



## Cats - especially stray and unvaccinated



## Dogs - especially stray & unvaccinated



## Ferrets

- Many people have ferrets as pets.
- They should be vaccinated for rabies.



## Mammals that are *less likely* to carry rabies



## Animals that don't carry rabies



### Signs of rabies in animals can include:

- Unusual behavior
  - ▣ Wild animals that appear friendly
  - ▣ Nocturnal animals active during the day
- An increase in drool or saliva
- Animals that act very sick or mean
- Animals that have difficulty moving or are dead

### The only way to tell

- In the laboratory
- Lab scientists test the brain of a dead animal for rabies.



### Rabies in Massachusetts 2003

#### 207 Wild animals diagnosed with rabies

- 86 Skunks
- 81 Raccoons
- 23 Bats
- 13 Foxes
- 4 Other wild animals

AND

**8 Domestic Animals**  
6 cats  
2 dogs

### Can rabies be prevented?

#### Yes!

- Vaccines (shots) against Rabies
- Wash bite wounds and scratches thoroughly
- Stay away from strays

**The best way to prevent rabies is to make sure your pets are vaccinated against rabies!!**

### Protect your pets

- Vaccinate your pet dog, cat, or ferret
- Always leash your dog.
- Tell an adult if you see a wild or stray animal acting strangely.
- If your pet gets bitten by an animal, call your vet right away.
- Get your pets spayed or neutered.

## Protect yourself

- Never touch an unfamiliar or wild animal.
- Always ask permission to touch someone else's pet.
- Call an animal control officer if you find a sick or hurt animal.
- Keep trash cans closed.
- Put all pet food away.

## If you are bitten or scratched



- ✦ Tell an adult immediately
- ✦ Wash the wound out with soap and water
- ✦ Call your doctor right away

## Rabies Quiz



## Which of these can carry rabies?



## Dogs?



## Raccoons?





**Snakes?**



**Cats?**



**Rabbit? (this one is tricky)**



**True or False?**

**Rabies is  
caused by  
a virus.**

**TRUE**



**True or False?**

**A bite from a  
snake can give  
you rabies.**

**FALSE**



**True or False?**

**The rabies  
virus affects  
the nervous  
system.**

**TRUE**



### True or False?

If you are bitten by any animal, you should clean the wound right away.

**TRUE**



### True or False?

People can get rabies from the saliva of an animal with rabies.

**TRUE**



### True or False?

You will always know if you are bitten by a bat, even if you are asleep.

**FALSE**



### True or False?

If you are bitten by a mouse, you should always receive the rabies vaccine.

**FALSE**



### The best way to protect yourself from rabies is:

- A. Avoid animals not known to you.
- B. Vaccinate your pets.
- C. Report animals with strange behavior.
- D. Maintain your property and keep trash properly contained.

**ALL OF THE ABOVE**



In 2003 in Massachusetts, which species had the highest number of rabies cases?






### **Watch out for rabies**


- Stay away from strays and wild animals
- If you see strays or wild animals, tell an adult.
- If you are ever bitten or scratched by an animal, tell an adult.
- Wash your cut with soap and water for 10 minutes.



### ***To learn more about Rabies***



 Massachusetts Department of Public Health:  
**[www.mass.gov/dph](http://www.mass.gov/dph) click on "R" for Rabies!**

 Center for Disease and Prevention:  
**[www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)**